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**LARSON: LACK OF GOP LEADERSHIP CONTINUES
INSTEAD OF WORKING ON REAL ENERGY SOLUTIONS, HOUSE
WASTES TIME ON FAILED LEGISLATION**

WASHINGTON, D.C.- U.S. Congressman John B. Larson (CT-1) today released the following statement on the House Energy Policy Act of 2004, H.R. 4503. The bill is a rehash of provisions contained in energy legislation that the Republican Majority passed last year, but that the Senate opposed on a bipartisan basis because of several controversial provisions the House leaders insisted be included in the conference report.

"We need real energy solutions, not more grandstanding," said Larson. "This controversial legislation has failed once, yet the Republican Majority is wasting the House's time bringing it to the floor again instead of truly working to solve our energy problems. Gas prices have soared, America continues to be far too dependent on foreign energy sources and energy alternatives such as fuel cells are still badly underfunded. The energy issue is crying out to be addressed by Congress, yet the GOP Leadership is squandering the opportunity to pass a bipartisan energy bill and is instead trying to prove a political point by dredging up a failed bill they know will go nowhere. We need a comprehensive energy strategy to establish our energy independence and protect our environment. The Majority has again demonstrated a failure of leadership on the energy issue."

The legislation contains provisions included in the conference report for last year's energy bill, H.R. 6, which the Senate did not pass. H.R. 4503 repeals

consumer protection rules and provides \$23.5 billion in tax breaks to energy producers, including oil and gas production. The bill also authorizes \$18 billion in loan guarantees for a natural gas pipeline from Alaska, provides liability protection for MTBE producers, postpones ozone attainment standards across the country, weakens environmental regulations related to oil and gas drilling and repeals consumer protection laws.

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